1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7



Yao make square houses.[1] Panelled doors and glass windows, deck-chairs and palm furniture are becoming more and more popular. The men wear long Moslem robes and the women are clothed in cotton. In the rural areas there are usually a few craftsmen who still ply their trades as carpenters and blacksmiths, though the latter no longer smelt, but use scrap-iron.

### Labour Migration

Statistics are not available for the Yao of Portuguese East Africa or Tanganyika Territory. Yao constitute 34 per cent. of the total population of South Nyasa district, 15 per cent. of upper Shire, 11 per cent. of Blantyre and Zomba.[2] The proportion of labour migrants in these districts was in 1937 as follows:[3]

| *District* | *Adult males fit to work* | *Percentage of emigrants* | *Number producing economic crops* | *Number of subsistence producers* | *Emigrants not heard of since 1939* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| South Nyasa . | 14,230 | 87·1 | 2,512 (15%) | 12,203 (85%) | 873 |
| Upper Shire . | 14,873 | 13·9 | 2,333 (16%) | 12,809 (87%) | 233 |
| Blantyre . . | 25,230 | 13·6 | 3,788 (15%) | 21,163 (85%) | 986 |
| Zomba . . | 16,879 | 10·4 | 7,700 (69%) | 6,240 (31%) | 333 |

South Nyasa district, which is underlain waterless bush with a long history of famine and food shortage, has the highest proportion of labour migrants. Upper Shire, though not fertile, is more prosperous, benefiting from the tobacco- and cotton-growing industries, and from the dried-fish trade.[4]

## SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

### Kinship and Local Grouping

Among the Yao succession is matrilineal and marriage mainly matrilocal. According to some informants succession formerly passed down the line of brothers, as with the Bemba, but it now passes direct to the eldest sister's eldest son, or to descendants of other sisters in order of seniority.[5] Chiefly succession follows the same rule, but the most senior may be set aside for a more suitable candidate.[6]

Clan names, *fukoya*, are inherited matrilineally, and formerly designated exogamous units,[7] but the marriage prohibition has now ceased to operate. Holders of the same clan name are unable to trace descent from a common ancestress, and for commoners clan names seem to have quite lost their significance; they are, however, carefully remembered in the chiefly lines and in other lines of hereditary rank, such as village headmen.

Within the general kinship grouping of the clan, a smaller group is recognized,

[1] Werner, 1906, p. 102; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 10–2, describes a round hut.

[2] 1931 Census information is taken because the district boundaries were changed between 1931 and 1945, so that the information in the 1945 Census would not be susceptible of comparison with that given in the 1937 Survey of Male Adult Population in the *Bull Report*, Appendix A.

[3] *Bull Report*, 1938, Appendix A. [4] Smith, 1950.

[5] Information, unless otherwise stated, is from Mitchell, and relates to south Nyasaland Yao.

[6] Johnston, 1897, p. 471; Meredith Sanderson, 1900, p. 350. Cf. Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 189, who says that brothers inherit before sister's son.

[7] Ibid., p. 189. [8] Swanson, q. 1910, p. 136.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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751
643

PLATE I

CHIEF KAWINGA THE SIXTH

He wears the traditional necklace of 'lions' claws which are medicined to protect him from the bullets of his enemies.

[facing p. iii]

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●291

PLATE VI

A typical village headman. He is dressed in white with a cloth thrown across his shoulder. He wears a white cap. This headman is not Government recognized, nor has he the right to wear a scarlet headband. He has no initiation rights.

(November 1946)

[facing p.128]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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.291

PLATE VII
A lineage elder in Chenjele village, Malawi area.
(August 1949)

[Facing p. 136]

[30] [54] that she is tattooed more profusely on the buttocks and legs. The circlet of beads was formerly made like suspender with a bark-cloth core, called *ntumbo* or *mbale* (*to undo, to slip off*), adhering to the *mbale* being *slipped off* over the legs. The fashion now is to wear single strings of beads; each string is of one color but all the strings are different and perhaps number a dozen or more.

*Lipumbu*: a bead belt three-inches wide, worn by Tso women near Lake Nyasa. A bead apron, *lisipwe*, is also worn by them but not near Zomba (Pl. VI, fig. 2).

[143] A woman removes her beads when she is "unclean," that is: (a) during the menstrual period, (b) during the period of mourning for a near relative when saliva is forbidden, (c) before the birth of a child and afterwards until such time as she may resume intercourse with her husband.

A large variety of beads has long been used by the Tso. There are some rarely seen now which were much prized in years gone by, while others are of quite recent introduction. There is no evidence that they themselves made beads and there are few which are probably not of European manufacture.

[277] **Clothing.** The Tso used bark-cloth before the introduction of woven materials. The older people may still be seen in it and it is used in most of the ceremonies. At one time, they also used to weave a cloth called *likwamndo* from a native cotton plant. This has been given up since the introduction of imported materials.

● 241 For the method of wearing cloth, see Pl. II, fig. 2. The very poorest people wear only a strip of cotton round the peduncle, held in position by a string round the waist hanging long behind and in front; this is called *mbalala*. Tso women, when menstruating, wear under this a little piece of cloth called *likwembi*. It is only worn at this time and not always as in certain other tribes.

[241] **Warfare.** Fighting has naturally played a large part in the life of the Tso as among other African tribes, but at no time were these people a trained fighting race. Warfare was of a desultory character consisting mostly of raids by one headed chief upon another. A party of men belonging to a chief at enmity with another, meeting some of his followers would challenge them, "*Alombo*, who are you for?" The name of the rival chief in answer was the sign for battle to begin. A false answer would never be given to gain an advantage. When about to throw a spear, the thrower calls to his adversary.

723 726 The Tso have possessed guns for a long time. Going out to fight, the Tso used to hang from one foot to the other, and spin their guns around in their hands. They made their own stocks for the rifles. They also used to make a small, cast-iron cannon about three feet long, called *kambala*, "a little gun." It was carried in the arms and was touched off by a torch. Drums called *ungoi* were taken into battle. There is an old war drum at Mulenya's village, taken in 1895 by the old Mulenya from a Mang'anja chief called Mbakumba who lived near Lake Chirwa. Since then, this drum has always gone into battle with Mulenya. Around it his men would dance and anyone who had killed a man in battle would run up to it and spit upon it in admiration.

[277] [304]

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[End Plate 2]

[End Plate 3]

[End Plate 5]

M2
.M1
S3

[End Note 2]

W2
A91

W2
A91
1934

[End Plate 9]

In Business D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7



632.
NZ.
391

NZ.
303

[End Plate 8]

330 H. S. STANNUS.—*Notes on Some Tribes of British Central Africa.*

M 501 **Necklaces**, most commonly for children, are made of a number of little square pieces of hippo ivory strung together, ornamented with geometrical designs.

M 989 **Medicine** is often carried in a little pocket suspended round the neck, as also charms of various kinds. The medicine may be some powdered charred resin or little twigs, leaves, etc., of some tree; these are sometimes now wrapped up in a piece of paper on which is written some extract from the Koran (among Mohammedan Yao); this is then worn in a little piece of calico and adorned with beads and suspended round the neck with a string.

Y [789] Charms take various forms. Small pieces of wood or, to guard against attack by lion, teeth are worn. *Armlets* of the same kind are worn against sickness, and others are worn by Angoni, made of beads to which knives are attached. *Bracelets* of ivory, plaited grass and elephant tail hairs are also worn.

M 501 **Metal** and wirework bracelets are commonly worn by Angoni, also twisted wire finger rings and rings of lead and ivory. Heavy brass ankle rings and spiral brass leg and arm rings 6 inches and 8 inches wide are worn by some of the women (Atonga).

M 501 **Bracelets** cut from the nail of the elephant's foot are worn by Awemba boatmen, and little finger rings cut from the ends of the ant-eater are worn as medicine against fever by headmen.

**Belts** made of twisted copper wire are worn round the waists by Wankonde.

M 502 The use of **pigments** applied to the body is very limited. I have seen stripes of them, white and red, on the faces of young women, boys and dancers, generally after some ceremony. The significance I do not know. Pigments are now obtained from Indian traders, and I do not know how old the custom is. There is no beautification of face, body, nails, and eyes by pigments. The only application made to the skin is castor seed ground-nut oils to keep it soft—no scents are used.

## Clothing.

M ● V N ● 291 [855] **Among tribes of Nyasaland** the amount of clothing worn varies very considerably from nothing to European garments.

Of the large majority, however, including Mohenja people, Yao and Angoni, one may speak generally.

The young children commonly run about naked, or have a strip of cloth covering the pudenda, supported by a string round the waist.

M J [852] **Among the adult population** the amount of clothing depends largely on the affluence of the individual, and those who cannot afford much have little clothing. A man wears a strip of calico supported in front and behind by a string round the waist, a woman a piece of calico 18 inches wide reaching from the middle of the thighs to the ankles.

Of the more prosperous, the men wear calico from a little below the knee to the waist, carefully wrapped round the body, and kept in position by some kind of belt; sometimes it is folded across the upper part of the chest or sometimes crossed over in front and two ends tied behind the neck.

4: Stanner D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT? Tao FT?
Ngoni F25
Maravi F24



Women wear their cloth folded across the upper level of the breasts from right to left. Men and women often have two cloths, one over the loins, only the second fastening over the chest.

A menstruating woman also wears a small piece of calico corresponding to a *chapar* supported by string round the waist.* The same thing is worn after childbirth for six months. Angoni women always wear them.

The Angoni, Chipeta wear their cloth toga-fashion, carrying a fold of cloth on the left arm. *Ku* Angoni *chital* wears three cloth, blue, white and coloured, the first outside, the last next to the skin.

The material used is now practically everywhere European-made calico, formerly bark cloth only was used by Nyanja, though weaving had been accomplished by Angoni, where skins were and are used as articles of clothing.

There is nothing to distinguish sets of various grades, etc. Fashion at the present time is very capricious—some patterned cloth being much worn one month will have no sale a month later; this is true both of men and of women.

There is no class uniform, and no "costumes" are worn save in dancing (q.v.).

Men are now seen wearing a piece of calico twisted up on the head in various forms, a custom lately introduced from the coast—the only indigenous head-gear is the string skull-cap worn by Angoni widows.

Under the heading of dress must be included the head spoons worn by Tao and Angoni. Among the former the use of this garment is restricted to the women, who in the house sometimes wear nothing else; among the Angoni the *chitanda* often have them and no other clothing.

Sandals are sometimes made of skin and fastened on the foot with a thong when crossing thorny country.

Among Angoni the wounds only used to be worn; this is a small hard-shelled fruit which was hollowed out and worn just covering the glans penis.

## Food, etc.

The staple food throughout the country is either maize or rice, the latter only at various spots on the lake shore where it can be grown. Two food meals per diem are taken, at 9 or 10 a.m. and again at 6 p.m.; each consists of native porridge made from maize flour or rice flour or boiled rice with some relish (*ndiwo*) to which the salt is added. At odd times the native will eat anything that opportunity offers—a piece of sugarcane root, a boiled sweet potato, a roasted maize cob, etc.

The native is made by stirring flour (*ufa*) into boiling water till a stiff paste is formed; this is kept cooking for five minutes and then stirred out with a wooden

* *Chapar* or *nchisi*: a woman keeps five or six; they are never put away in baskets but always hung up; a woman changes every time she bathes, using two or three per diem; they may be given to a female child to wear, but are then not worn again by a woman.